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Governor's Proposed Budget FY18-FY-19
Appropriations Hearing
Department of Housing
Friday, February 17, 2017

February 15, 2017

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Representative Ziobron, and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony today on the important investments through the Department of Housing to support efforts to end homelessness in Connecticut. Governor Malloy and our legislative leaders have long understood and supported the importance of ending homelessness in our state.

Connecticut has made and continues to make progress towards the goal to end homelessness and we are particularly proud of the role that we have played in this effort. It is now more important than ever to preserve the money that the state has invested so that we can continue this momentum.

The current budget proposal preserves funding for critical housing and homelessness services and supports, including:

The DOH Housing/Homeless Services line item, \$73.7 million in FY 18 and \$78.3 million in FY 19, for frontline housing/homeless services, outreach, emergency shelters, and the Rental Assistance Program (RAP), which are essential to aid those who have fallen into homelessness and to move them quickly into permanent housing. The Rental Assistance Program funds the rental subsidies that make Supportive Housing possible.

Although we recognize that Connecticut's budget crisis requires that tough choices have to be made to our state budget, we believe that cuts to these services would risk reversing the substantial progress we have made to end chronic homelessness. Cuts to these critically important services could mean increases in unsheltered, high-need homelessness – taking us the wrong direction, and *imposing new costs* on our communities.



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- Supportive Housing continues to be the most effective housing model to assist people experiencing chronic homelessness and is proven to cut public system costs by up to 70%.
- The Homeless Youth line item: Youth outreach services, crisis housing for youth, and housing services and supports are essential services to transition youth from crisis to stability.

Homelessness is an unacceptable condition for any Connecticut resident, and an expensive public policy problem. Investments in frontline homeless services, permanent supportive housing, and support services save public resources and help families and individuals transition to economic stability, permanent housing and a future built upon sustainability thereby breaking the cycle of chronic homelessness.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to present testimony and for your support of our efforts to end homelessness in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Toni Dolan
Executive Director
Beth-El Center, Inc.